

About WOMEN in Washington

BY LAURENCE BURD
(Chicago Tribune Press Service)

NEWPORT, R. I., Aug. 5—Mrs. Ann Whitman has one of the most coveted—and most demanding secretarial jobs in the world. She is President Eisenhower's personal secretary.

"Fortunately, I like hard work and that's what I get."



says the slender brown-eyed graying Mrs. Whitman, who has been the President's secretary since the summer of 1952 when he was bidding for his first term.

In the eight years since then, Ann has taken only two vacations and has traveled almost every one of the 32,696 miles that her boss has. What's her favorite spot?

"It's a little hard to say," she smiles. "I've seen the inside of a lot of places, and napped on a lot of planes. But there hasn't been much time for sight-seeing."

When traveling, as when in Washington, Mrs. Whitman puts in 11 to 12 hours a day, plus occasional extra stints at night and on Sundays. All incoming telephone calls to her boss come to her first.

SHE TAKES ALL the President's dictation of letters, speeches, and memoranda. She drafts hundreds of letters every year for him to read and sign. Her salary is \$11,355 a year.

She is always on call except for an occasional week-end when she makes a quick trip to Boston to be with her father, Willis Cook, was a gentleman farmer with a comfortable income. She went to Antioch college and graduated in 1933. While under Antioch's work-study program, she took a job with the Institute for Child Guidance in New York City.

They were married in 1939 and have no children. Ann has a two room apartment, with pullman kitchen, less than a mile from the White House. She gets up at 6:15, makes herself a light breakfast and walks to work.

Often walking to work with her is Thomas Stephens, the President's appointments secretary, who has an apartment in the same building. Both check into the White House by 7:30, a half hour or so ahead of the boss. If all goes well, they leave around 7 p. m.

MRS. WHITMAN has her office on one side of the President's big oval office and Stephens has his on the other. There are connecting doors from the President's room to each of the two secretaries' rooms.

Ann says President Eisenhower is a good boss, a stickler for having work done right, but appreciative of the long hours and many demands that go with working for him. She calls it a "really great privilege" to work for the President.

Mrs. Whitman says the President talks fast when dictating letters, but that his dictation syntax is good in contrast to some of the unwieldy sentences he gets off in press conferences and ad lib speeches.

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

Mrs. Whitman was born Ann Cook in Perry, O. Her husband, Edmund Whitman, a vice president of the United Fruit company. Her husband, "Whit," visits her in Washington now and then, but there is not much time or energy for gayety.

SOON AFTER GRADUATION she became secretary in New York to the late Mrs. David Levy, a daughter of Julius Rosenwald, who was carrying on her father's philanthropic work and was a patron of the arts.

In the late 1940s Mrs. Whitman quit her job and took a job with Radio Free Europe and there became acquainted with several men who were in the forefront of the Culture for Eisenhower movement in 1952.

She joined the organization as a jack of all trades and wound up after the President's 1952 nomination as one of a battery of secretaries at his Denver headquarters.

The President-elect was trying out various personal secretaries and one morning Ann was given a trial. She has had the job since.

When she was first introduced to him, Gen. Eisenhower caught her name as "Mrs. Whitney" and that's what he called her for months. By the time he learned her name was Whitman, he was calling her Ann. She had to learn to shift after the 1953 inauguration from calling him "Gen. Eisenhower" to "Mr. President."